



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

<http://finance.senate.gov>

For Immediate Release

Monday, March 31, 2003

Grassley Leads Effort to Urge a Trade Agreement with New Zealand

____ WASHINGTON – Sen. Chuck Grassley, chairman of the Committee on Finance, and 18 other senators have sent a letter, with bipartisan support, to the President urging the administration to initiate a free trade agreement with New Zealand.

The letter is in response to the administration's Nov. 13, 2002, notification of its intent to initiate a free trade agreement with Australia and its request to solicit the views of Congress on a possible free trade agreement with New Zealand.

The United States is New Zealand's second-largest trading partner next to Australia.

March 28, 2003

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Bush:

We are writing to encourage you to launch negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with New Zealand.

In his notification to Congress on initiating a FTA with Australia, Ambassador Zoellick stated that he plans to solicit the views of Congress on a possible FTA with New Zealand. While withholding any judgment until the final agreement is reached, we welcome and support Ambassador Zoellick's initiative on New Zealand, and look forward to working with him during the negotiations. Given the integration of the New Zealand and Australian economies, it would be advantageous for the United States to consider negotiating FTAs with both countries.

New Zealand is a strong partner in opening markets around the world and promoting security. A United States-New Zealand FTA will encourage greater trade liberalization in the Asia-Pacific region and continue our effort to expand trade. Furthermore, New Zealand has made a major contribution to the campaign against terrorism by deploying its special forces to Afghanistan over the past year. Recently, New Zealand committed naval and air force assets in the Arabian Sea and Gulf of Oman as part of a coalition effort to police these sea routes against Al Qaeda and Taliban terrorists on the run.

Launching a United States-New Zealand FTA is a natural complement to the United States-Australia FTA and, if the agreements are comprehensive and properly structured, would benefit the economies of all three countries. We ask that you begin negotiations with New Zealand as soon as possible.

Sincerely yours,

Chuck Grassley	Bill Frist	Gordon Smith
Peter Fitzgerald	Jon Kyl	Chuck Hagel
Jim Talent	Thad Cochran	Maria Cantwell
Richard Lugar	Ron Wyden	
John Breaux	John McCain	
Don Nickles	Orrin Hatch	
Pat Roberts	Sam Brownback	
Craig Thomas	Zell Miller	